

OPPORTUNITY
MONOGRAPH

Vocational
Rehabilitation
Series No. 38

Show Card Writing



FOR DISABLED SOLDIERS, SAILORS
AND MARINES TO AID THEM
IN CHOOSING A VOCATION

Prepared by the
FEDERAL BOARD FOR VOCATIONAL EDUCATION
and issued in cooperation with the
Office of the Surgeon General, War Department, and
Bureau of Medicine and Surgery, Navy Department

MAY, 1919

Note to the Disabled Soldier, Sailor, or Marine.

As a disabled soldier, sailor, or marine you should remember that the Office of the Surgeon General, War Department, and all its employees, the Bureau of Medicine and Surgery, Navy Department, and all its employees, and the Federal Board for Vocational Education and all its employees are mutually interested in your welfare solely. They have arranged a definite plan of cooperation to help you in every possible way. You can not afford to leave the hospital until the medical officers have done everything that they can for you to restore you to physical health and strength. Any other course will interfere with your vocational success later. Furthermore, you should by all means take advantage of the educational opportunities which the hospital has provided for you.

While you are making up your mind what line of work you want to follow you should take advantage of the opportunities to try yourself out in the different lines of activities which are provided at the hospital. When once you have made up your mind as to the employment you want to enter or the kind of training you want the Federal Board to give you after you leave the hospital, you should ask the vocational officers at the hospital to provide for you the kind of training which will advance you in the direction of the occupation which you expect to follow or for which you expect to be trained after you leave the hospital. You will find the educational officers at the hospital eager to render this service for you, and you should consult them early in your hospital career.

All disabled soldiers, sailors, and marines in hospitals who want information about reeducation should ask any instructor of the Hospital Educational Service or the representative of the Federal Board for Vocational Education.

Men discharged from the military or naval service who want information should write to or call at the office of the Federal Board for Vocational Education, Washington, D. C., or the District Office of the Federal Board of the district in which they are located. The district offices of the Board are located at the following points: Boston, New York City, Philadelphia, Washington, Atlanta, New Orleans, Dallas, St. Louis, Cincinnati, Chicago, Minneapolis, Denver, San Francisco, and Seattle. For addresses see p. 11.

Acknowledgment.

This monograph was prepared by May H. Pope, under direction of Charles H. Winslow, Chief of the Research Division of the Federal Board for Vocational Education. Acknowledgment is due to Dr. John Cummings, of the Research Division, for editorial assistance.

SHOW-CARD WRITING.

The purpose of the show card.

A man's attention is attracted through his sense of sight more readily than in any other way. A word, a phrase, a pithy sentence will catch his eye and focus his interest, where something requiring more concentration would fail. For this reason window dressing has grown into an important feature of every merchant's business, and cards pointing out the quality and prices of the goods displayed are universally used. These show cards were formerly made by sign painters, until some, more farseeing than others, realized the opportunity to specialize in this line of work, which has now developed into a distinctive trade.

Different types of cards.

There is a great variety of types in show cards. Some are large, others are small; some are ornamented with designs suitable for the occasion, or season, or goods to be featured in the advertisement; others are plain numerals or letters giving the bare detail of cost. As these cards are shown in the street cars, on moving-picture announcements, on billboards at theater entrances, as well as in the stores, they must be so varied as to be appropriate to their surroundings.



A practical feature in writing show cards is the selection of some special design or slogan with which the article or firm may always be associated in the mind of the public. In this field a show-card writer with originality is able to realize materially upon his ideas.

Future of the trade.

Because the merchant believes that seeing is very likely to mean buying he finds the show-card writer indispensable to his business. Whether large or small, every store needs these display cards with their catchy announcements to aid in promoting business. Present-day competition makes it necessary that every known means of attracting attention shall be utilized by the merchant who would keep up in his line. Progressiveness in store management has occasioned rapid growth in the trade of card writing within the last few years, and the constantly increasing demand for advertising indicates that the trade of show-card writing has an assured future.

Opportunity Monographs.

As a disabled man interested in how you can "carry on" when you get back home, you can not afford to miss reading the Opportunity Monographs published by the Federal Board for Vocational Education for your special benefit. In them you will find, plainly and simply stated, all the information you need about many, many occupations in which you may be interested. By reading them you will know better what you would like to do, and the representatives of the Federal Board, wherever you may meet them, in hospital or office or by correspondence when necessary, will be in the position to help you make your choice of what you want to do, help you get properly prepared for it, and put you in the proper occupation after you have been prepared to stand on your feet as a worker in it.

Remember this! Equipment.

A handicap is a state of mind. If you have one, change your mind. You can do that and no one else can do it for you. Grit will beat any handicap as it won the war. It will beat yours.

Your handicap is not a handicap unless you are determined to make it one. The folks back home know that you do not wish to be a dependent idler for life, and the Government proposes to help you re-establish yourself in a civil employment as an independent worker with every opportunity for advancement.

You will not be compelled to take any training whatever, but you will be given expert advice and help in getting such training as you need, if you choose to take it. Your disability compensation will not be reduced because you take training and learn to work. Your wages will be additional income and your compensation will continue in the same amount that will be paid if you do not take training. The training is free and you and your family will be maintained during the period of training. It's up to you!

For the man possessing limited capital the small cost of the necessary equipment is an alluring inducement to enter the trade. A few dollars will cover the entire cost. Brushes, pens, penholder, with ink retainer, ruler, art gum or sponge rubber, thumb tacks, combination compass, a pair of large shears, a T-square, a box of charcoal, soft lead pencils, and cardboard make up the list of necessary material for the show-card writer. A good-sized drawing board completes the list. "The better the workman the fewer the tools" has been said. An expert card writer works efficiently with a board, a T-square, and a half dozen thumb tacks.

What men in the trade should know.

A good general education is essential for a show-card writer who expects to be more than merely a mechanical maker of words and letters. Those who become expert in the art need a knowledge of designing and an originality in composing effective phrases, such as can not be resisted even by those who read the cards casually.

A practical knowledge of the geometric construction of letters is fundamental, for though simple lettering may be largely mechanical work, skill must not be confined to the utilization of mechanical means alone.

A knowledge of color is an advantage to those who make sign cards. Color combinations and contrasts play an important part in producing attractive cards. As card writers are confronted by all sorts of combinations of words in inscriptions, it is necessary for them to know letter forms; to understand novelty in designing, arrangement, and artistic embellishment; and to exercise taste in harmonizing colors, so as to produce cards that will be not only neat and attractive but at the same time legible.

What men in the trade do.

Show-card writers make price tickets and all types of trade cards used in windows, on special sale sections, on the announcement boards of theaters, on automobiles, in cafeterias, in street cars, and wherever else the card may serve as a proper medium for advertising. The trade is carried on in different ways. Cards are sometimes made by salesmen who give only part of their time to this work. Other writers give all of their time to one firm requiring a large number of cards for its own use. Some card writers work for show-card firms and others have their own offices and fill special orders.

Opportunities.

The demand for show-card writers is far greater than the supply. Every small town offers an opening for one or more, who would make a good living at the trade in that locality.

How men are trained.

Many card writers are trained in the shop. Correspondence courses afford fair advantages to the man who must save time and money, but personal supervision is of great advantage, and personal criticism is essential if a correspondence course is taken. Courses in card writing are now offered in technical schools and Y. M. C. A. classes and vocational schools all over the country. Among the schools now offering courses in show-card writing are the following:

Federal School of Commercial Art, Minneapolis, Minn.

Idaho Technical Institute.

Los Angeles Y. M. C. A. schools.

St. Louis Y. M. C. A. schools.

Lowry Sign and Advertising Service, Chicago.

Link's Business College, Boise, Idaho.

State Trade School, Danbury, Conn.

Appleton, Wis., Industrial School.

Kenosha, Wis., Vocational School.

Neenah, Wis., Industrial School.

New York High School.

New York Vocational Schools.

Detroit, Mich., School of Letters.

Augustana College, Rock Island, Ill.

College of Commerce, De Paul University, Chicago.

School of Industrial Arts, Trenton, N. J.

Koester School, Chicago.

Semby School, Minneapolis, Minn.

The length of time required for the completion of courses depends upon the student; one very good course covers eight weeks. Some students after the fifth or sixth lesson have done work sufficiently creditable to bring a money return. Proper and methodical training is very necessary. Care and exactness must first be acquired and speed will naturally follow.

Courses given in show-card writing cover such subjects as how to mix and when to use water colors, inks, and oils; the care of brushes and pens; the proper kind and color of cardboards to use; and how to apply bronze and diamond dust. The formation of pen and brush letters is, of course, fundamental, and the principles of lettering must be taught in a simple, thorough, and



correct way. Proper instruction, with application, is bound to bring success.

BRIEF SYNOPSIS OF THE COURSE IN SHOW-CARD WRITING GIVEN AT THE KOESTER SCHOOL, CHICAGO.

Lesson plates Nos. 1 to 6.—Improved method for teaching correct formation and relative proportions of letters and numerals.—Brush method.

General instructions.—Proper materials, student's worktable, light, how to care for brushes, show-card paint, how to practice, kind of practice that counts, lesson plates explained, how to fill the brush, how to bring the brush to working point, how to hold the brush, position at table, position of paper.

Lesson plates Nos. 7 to 10.—Single stroke rapid roman lettering.—How to begin the practice, time-saving methods, how to hold the brush, various positions of the brush explained, how to manipulate the brush to produce clean-cut strokes, purpose of single-stroke vertical and italic roman lettering.

Lesson plates Nos. 11 and 12.—How to shade letters.—Various styles of shading, proper colors for shading, shading as an embellishment, shading to give emphasis.

Lesson plates Nos. 13 to 16.—Single stroke egyptian lettering.—Brushes to use, how to hold the brush, how to manipulate the brush to produce the proper stroke, how to practice the elementary lines and curves.

Lesson plates Nos. 17 and 18.—Single and double stroke alphabet and numerals.—Purpose of this style of letter, brushes to use, method explained, different methods of finishing the letters.

Will you Carry on?

If none of the occupations outlined in this pamphlet are possible ones for you to learn, the Government has provided hundreds of courses in other lines, among which there is one precisely suited to meet your needs—one in which you can become 100 per cent efficient, whatever injury you may have suffered.

The scheme of occupations for which training will be provided by the Government free of cost to you includes more different sorts of employments than you have ever heard tell of. If you don't find one that suits you in this pamphlet, get another.

After you have been trained, Uncle Sam will undertake to find an employer who needs your help, or if you prefer to go it on your own, you will be provided with an outfit of tools.

If the training misses fire the first time and you find the new occupation unsuited to you, you can come back for another go in the game, and try a new occupation.

\$25 or \$10 a Week!

What is the difference between \$25 and \$10 a week; between comfort and poverty; between independence and the constant fear of dependency; between saving for a rainy day and living from hand to mouth? The difference is one of training. It is the difference between the trained and the untrained man. Therefore, take training.

Lesson plate No. 19.—Single-stroke old English alphabet.—Purpose of old English lettering how to hold the brush, retouching the principal strokes.

Lesson plate No. 20.—Single-stroke modified roman pen lettering.—Advantages of pen lettering for text or descriptive matter, inks to use, how to practice pen lettering, how to hold the pen, how to manipulate the pen to procure clean-cut strokes, how to use an ink reservoir to facilitate rapid work.

Fifteen practical show-card layouts.—In the foregoing lessons the student acquires sufficient ability to enable him to make practical use of his knowledge. The alphabets covered are sufficient for general show-card use. Therefore, at this point, the course presents 15 practical layouts showing how the text should be separated into display lines and descriptive groups, also various styles of letters that may be used in harmony for display and descriptive matter. An appropriate show-card phrase is used for each layout. Display lines and descriptive groups are indicated in the exact size and styles of letters to be used in lettering each layout. Specific directions as to color, combinations, and embellishments are given for each layout.

A study in design and layout.—The principles of spacing, importance of show-card designing, best rules for spacing, lessons in spacing, how to center a word or line.

Condensing and extending letters.—How to plan lettering to fit a given space, rules for condensing, rules for extending, appropriate uses of condensed and extended letters, practice exercises.

Principles of the balanced layout.—Balanced layout defined, how to plan the balanced layout, important points to observe, examples of balanced layout, practice exercises in balanced layouts.

Border lines, underscore, space fillers, and panels.—Brush ruling, how to draw an ellipse, initial panels, initial letters, a few card kinks.

The group layout.—How to plan the group layout, examples of group layout, practice exercises in group layout.

Combination layout.—Purpose of the combination layout, how to divide the phrase into display lines and groups for the combination layout, examples of combination layouts, exercises in combination layouts.

Price tickets.—Normal style price tickets, bold style price tickets, small price tickets, fancy price tickets, illustrative price tickets, practice exercises.

Illustrated show cards.—Sources of ideas, tracing from clipped illustrations, how to use the pantograph for enlarging illustrations, the mirrorscope, examples of appropriate designs for various purposes, exercises in illustrated show cards.

Principles of colors.—Color contrasts.—How to mix water-color paint, color effects; color combination; mixing standard colors to produce shades, tints, and unusual colors; lessons in color combinations.

Show-card embellishment.—Dry-color blending; spatter work; relief lettering; applying metallics, diamond dust, flock, etc.; phrase and picture filing; seasonable embellishments; floral decorations; poster cut-outs; silhouettes; how to paint muslin signs.

Instruction in the use of the air brush.—Principles of the air brush; sectional view of an air brush; illustrating and describing all important parts; air pressure; how to put a gas outfit together; colors for air-brush use; how to use the air brush; care of the air brush; how to cut stencils; practice exercises to gain control of brush; color blending; exercises in the use of stencil designs.

Lesson plate No. 21.—Single-stroke alphabet and numerals for modern speed ball pen lettering.

Lesson plate No. 22.—Uniform single-stroke alphabet and numerals for Payzant pen lettering.

Lesson plate No. 23.—Single-stroke Payzant or speed ball pen alphabet with retouched parts.

Lesson plate No. 24.—Speed ball pen initial capitals, retouched and embellished.

Lesson plate No. 25.—Outline roman initial embellished capitals, plain lower-case letters.

Lesson plate No. 26.—Modern roman and fancy alphabets for music pen lettering.

Lesson plate No. 27.—Old English text pen, and small speed ball pen alphabets.

Lesson plate No. 28.—Speed ball pen alphabets.

Lesson plate No. 29.—Rapid single-stroke antique roman brush alphabet.

Lesson plate No. 30.—Rapid single-stroke modified roman brush alphabet.

Lesson plate No. 31.—Single-stroke antique alphabet and numerals.

Qualifications.

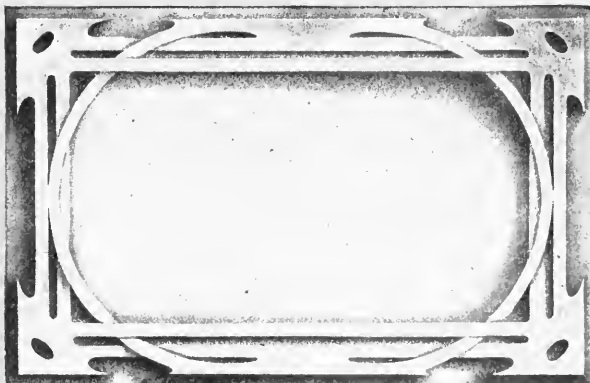
Anyone who can learn to write can learn to draw or print letters for show cards. It is not essential to have artistic ability, although this

HE HAS BEEN
TEASING FOR
SPEEDBALL
ALPHABETS.
ON THE SQUARE
AND ROUND
POINT STYLE A.
STYLE B.

In fashion's
high esteem
are dresses
of wool jersey

Third floor

We have ———
the reputation of
being just a little
ahead of the rest.



Examples to follow.

A former carpenter whose left leg was amputated above the knee on account of injuries received in battle studied machine designing and is now employed by a railway.

Another soldier suffered with chronic bronchitis and asthma, and found it inadvisable to return to his former occupation as a bartender. He was trained as a motor mechanic and secured an open-air position as chauffeur.

A former laborer was weakened by a gunshot wound in the back and abdomen. He was given a course in mechanical drawing and is now employed in a drafting room.

A soldier suffering from chronic nephritis, formerly a farmer, studied machine-shop practice and is now employed in the tool room of a motor company.

A machinist's helper lost the power to use his left hand, was retrained in a course for steam engineering, and is now employed as a stationary engineer in a roundhouse.

would be an asset in the trade; a steady hand and a correct eye are the only requirements, and it is well to remember that "the sight that insures correct drawing is not that of the eye only, but of the mind."

Handicaps.

Good eyesight is essential, but almost no handicap other than blindness, or the loss of both arms, is prohibitive. It is an advantage to have both hands, but the fact that one-armed men have so clearly demonstrated their ability to write as legibly as others with both hands indicates that the difficulty for a man with one hand becoming a show-card writer can be overcome.

Desirability for the disabled man.

The work is not heavy, the hours may be adjusted to the strength of the worker, the prospects for work in the trade are favorable, and the pay is good—all of which characterizes the trade as one suitable for disabled men. A chief attraction which show-card writing holds out for the handicapped man is the freedom allowed in the choice of a working place. He may be independent, not only in the place of his work, but in selecting his own hours for work. This liberty means much for a man who is physically below normal. The conditions under which a writer of show cards works are favorable, both as to time and place.

Remuneration.

Show-card writing is a fascinating art and brings good profits. For this reason its appeal will be strong to the wounded soldier.

An exact standard of prices has never been possible for card writing, as so much depends upon the quality of the work and the time required to make the cards. The cost of the material is negligible; but show cards have an intrinsic value to the merchant, who is usually willing to pay for them.

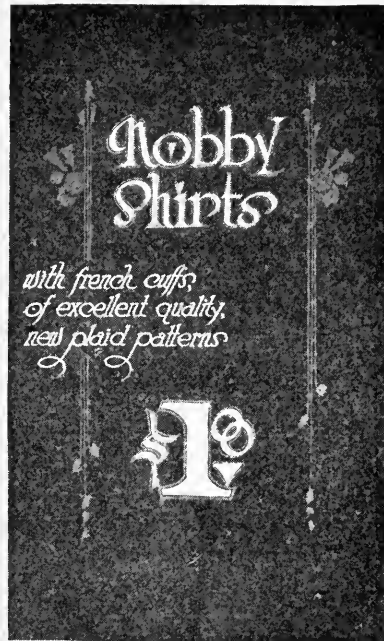
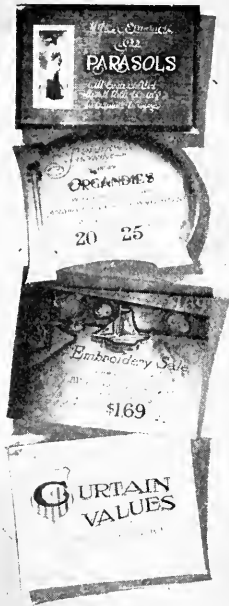
Card writers make from \$25 to \$75 a week. Advertising cards, being of a temporary nature, must be inexpensive. Rapidity is necessary, in order to make it profitable, as the writers are usually paid by piece-work. The example may be cited of a hunchback who began show-card writing at \$3 a week and by his energy and application rose to a salary of \$40 in a short while.

A lack of application or giving way to discouragement over first attempts may cause failure, but for no other reason should a disabled man who desires to become a writer of trade cards feel the slightest fear of the undertaking. Begin the course with a determination to succeed, and remember that lack of confidence is not conducive to success in any trade. Learn the principle strokes with great care, practice diligently until dexterity is acquired, work without hesitation, boldly and with enthusiasm, and in a short time there will be acquired expertness in a trade which is interesting, agreeable, and lucrative.



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Samples of show-card writing.

FEDERAL BOARD FOR VOCATIONAL EDUCATION.

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DISTRICT VOCATIONAL OFFICES OF THE FEDERAL BOARD FOR VOCATIONAL EDUCATION.

All disabled soldiers, sailors, and marines, whether in or out of the hospital, should address their communications either to the Federal Board for Vocational Education, Washington, D. C., or to the district office of the Federal Board of the district in which they are located. The district offices of the Board are located at the following points, respectively:

District No. 1.—Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, Massachusetts, and Rhode Island. Office: Room 1201 Little Building, 80 Boylston Street, Boston, Mass. Branch office: Rooms 324-326 Masonic Building, Portland, Me.

District No. 2.—Connecticut, New York, and New Jersey. Office: 469 Fifth Avenue, New York, N. Y.

District No. 3.—Pennsylvania and Delaware. Office: 1211 Chestnut Street, Philadelphia, Pa. Branch office: Room 491 Union Arcade Building, Pittsburgh, Pa.

District No. 4.—District of Columbia, Maryland, Virginia, and West Virginia. Office: 606 F Street NW., Washington, D. C. Branch offices: Room 400 Flat Iron Building, Norfolk, Va.; Room 411 Park Bank Building, 104 West Lexington Street, Baltimore, Md.

District No. 5.—North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, Florida, and Tennessee. Office: Room 823 Forsyth Building, Atlanta, Ga.

District No. 6.—Alabama, Mississippi, and Louisiana. Office: Rooms 412-432 Maison Blanche Annex, New Orleans, La.

District No. 7.—Ohio, Indiana, and Kentucky. Office: Rooms 1212-1214 Mercantile Library Building, Cincinnati, Ohio. Branch office: Home Service Section, American Red Cross, Park Building, Cleveland, Ohio.

District No. 8.—Michigan, Illinois, and Wisconsin. Office: Room 1600 The Westminster, 110 South Dearborn Street, Chicago, Ill. Branch office: Room 807 Owen Building, Detroit, Mich.

District No. 9.—Iowa, Nebraska, Kansas, and Missouri. Office: Rooms 815-824 Chemical Building, St. Louis, Mo. Branch office: Room 413 Massachusetts Building, Kansas City, Mo.

District No. 10.—Minnesota, North Dakota, and South Dakota. Office: Room 712 Metropolitan Bank Building, Minneapolis, Minn.

District No. 11.—Wyoming, Colorado, New Mexico, and Utah. Office: Room 400 Mercantile Building, Denver, Colo.

District No. 12.—California, Nevada, and Arizona. Office: Room 997 Monadnock Building, San Francisco, Calif.

District No. 13.—Montana, Idaho, Oregon, and Washington. Office: Room 539 Central Building, Seattle, Wash.

District No. 14.—Arkansas, Oklahoma, and Texas. Office: Room 810 Western Indemnity Building, 1000 Main Street, Dallas, Tex.

